

**Ninth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the
progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the
Eighth Conference**

**Report on the Situation in Pakistan on Standardization
of Geographical Names**

Submitted by Pakistan **

* E/CONF.98/1.

** Prepared by Pakistan.

Report on the Situation in Pakistan on
Standardization of Geographical Names with reference
to 9th United Nations Conference on Standardization of
Names, New York 21 – 30 August 2007

Background

The Islamic republic of Pakistan emerged as an independent sovereign state on 14 August, 1947. It covers an area of 796,096 sq. kms with a population of 132.35 million according to the census of 1998. The country comprises of vast area that was the centre of great ancient civilization of the world. Ancient sites excavated in Taxila, Harrapa and Moenjodaro speaks volumes of Pakistan's rich culture.

Survey of Pakistan is a national surveying and mapping organization of the country and responsible for collection and standardization of geographical names. The organization has been cooperating with UN on standardization of geographical names and its representatives had been attending Conferences, Seminar and training in Toponymy.

As per requirement of the UNGEGN, the department prepared a gazetteer of geographical names which includes 4628 names. It includes all important names of geographical features in the country. The geographical names have been picked up from 1:1 Million map series. Computerization of the gazetteer is underway as per format recommended by UNGEGN.

Geographical names are collected during the field survey by the surveyor. These are reconfirmed from the local officer of the revenue department and then transliterated in Roman alphabet by camp officer in the form

designed for the purpose. The officer in charge again check this transliteration in the office before recommending it to appear in the map.

The department has successfully digitized 1:250,000, 1:500,000 and 1:1 Million map series and so all related geographical names. About half of the sheets on 1:50,000 map series have been digitized and it is hoped that within next two years remaining sheets will be completed.

Formation of National body under the umbrella of surveyor general of Pakistan dealing both the subject of standardization of geographical names is under consideration. Need for creation of a website is also being felt.

Participation in Conferences

Representative of Pakistan has been participating in UN conferences on standardization of geographical names and regional seminars and conferences being held in Iran:

Participation in training courses on Toponymy

Representative of Survey of Pakistan participated in training course on Toponymy at East Java Indonesia in 2005. The representative made following recommendations which are being implemented.

- a. Working Group on Historical Names.
- b. Working Group on Website of Geographical names.
- c. Working Group on Data base based on 1:50K scale map's geographical names.
- d. Up-gradation of gazetteer of geographical name working group.

Languages

Most of the languages of Pakistan are part of the family of Indo-European languages and span the Indo-Iranian range of that family with the Indo-Aryan languages predominant in the east and the Iranian languages the most significant in the west as well as Dardic languages in the north and northwest. English can mainly be heard with a few other languages. Officially Pakistan has 80 speaking tongues in the country excluding Urdu and English. The main language spoken in the country are urdu,english,punjabi,pushto,sindhi,balochi,hindko,siriaki,brahai.

Urdu is the national and official language, the lingua franca of the people. It is widely used, both formally and informally, for personal letters as well as public literature, in the literary sphere and in the popular media. Urdu is Pakistan's national language and has been promoted as a token of national unity. By origin dialect of Urdu is from Hindi language (which itself is a modern form of Prakrit). Urdu was spoken for centuries in the neighbourhood of Delhi and it was known as Western Hindi, Hindavi, Dehlavi, Reekhta and Hindustani. It is written in a modified form of the Arabic alphabet and basically its Indic vocabulary has been enriched by borrowings from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, English and other Indian languages. Urdu has drawn inspiration from Persian literature and has now an enormous stock of words.

National Body

Unlike the developed countries, there does not exist any national authority exclusively for the collection, management, transliteration and standardization of geographical names, need for the same authority is felt strongly. Various administrative bodies take decisions on names in the country. Names and Town/Cities are given by Municipal Corporations, Karachi Development Authority, Capital Development Authority, Lahore Development Authority etc. The Revenue department is

also authorized on the names of cadastral, Muqtadra Urdu acts as an authoritative organ in matters related to standardization of place names by giving guidance.

At present, there is no central body who have the powers to decide on names. The department has recommended that there should be a National body working under the over all umbrella of Surveyor General of Pakistan with members from Muqtadra Urdu, Revenue Department, Director Map Publication(Survey of Pakistan) Chairman History Department (Quaid-e-Azam University).

Collections of Geographical Names in the Field

All the geographical names are picked up by the surveyors during the course of field survey (Geographic data collection or compilation survey phases in vernacular dialect and entered in the forms designed for the purpose). These names are then got verified by the local officials and corrected where necessary. Transliteration of these names into Roman dialect is done in accordance with the Hunterian system.

Methodology for writing names in the field

Survey of Pakistan carries out field survey for the updating of the maps. The surveyors employed for geographic data collection pick-up the names of the graphic features, locality names, tribe names, site names etc. and record in the forms designed for the purpose. These vernacular names are generally written in Urdu script by using consonants, vowels and diphthongs. Diacritical or orthographic signs are also used for proper pronunciation of the names. It is, therefore, very essential to use these marks or signs on the consonants at the time of recording of names in the field and this technique makes the pronunciation quite clear and facilitates in correct transliteration.

Office Treatment of Names

The transliteration of the names is thoroughly checked and corrected in the office before placing them in the body of the maps. These Names are then categorized into different feature type classes such as Administrative Boundaries, Roads, settlement, Hydrology etc. in order to assign a suitable font type according to their importance.

Transliteration of Geographic Names

The maps of Survey of Pakistan contain names in Roman alphabet (use of letter A-Z especially used in Western Europe) which are transliterated from vernacular according to a system called “Hunterian System” which has been adapted by Survey of Pakistan for the spelling of the names within Pakistan. The following items will help to understand the procedures / methods regarding collection/recording, transliteration and standardization of geographical names by Survey of Pakistan (NMA).

Transliteration of Names is carried out in the following manner:

- a. When the geographical names are collected in the field in vernacular, they are written in the Urdu script.
- b. Diacritical signs are used to correctly pronounce the names and every letter in Urdu alphabet is uniformly represented by a corresponding letter in Roman character.
- c. There are certain exceptions where names having more than one part in vernacular are rendered into one word on their transliteration into Roman character.

Use of GPS in collection of site coordinates

GPS has been used extensively in geodesy and surveying since early 1990s. It is also being used for collection of coordinates of the geographical features in the department. The basic datum used for

mapping on 1:50,000 maps is Everest-1830 yet WGS-84 is also used for extra departmental projects wherever required. Lambert Conical Conformal mapping is used for 1:50,000 scale map series in the department but UTM is also used in project where required.

Cartographic aspect

Digitization of sheets is being done using Arc GIS software in the department. National standards for map digitization and color policy have been devised.

Preparation of Gazetteer

In Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the names of geographical features are picked up during the course of field survey and they are transliterated into Roman (Western style of English) according to the Hunterian system devised by the British era. This system is not perfect but has been in use in the continent for last many decades. The collection/recording of geographical names falls in the jurisdiction of National Mapping Agency (NMA) i.e. Survey of Pakistan. No standard gazetteer was compiled before the United Nations 5th conference on geographical names held on August 1987. In Pakistan the work on preparation of National Gazetteers of geographical names was started just after 5th UN Conference and gazetteer of names appearing in the 1:1000K scale maps was compiled.

Gazetteer of geographical names has been prepared showing coordinates of geographical names in Everest-1830. It is a collection of 4628 Geographic names. The format of the gazetteer is as under.

Name	Feature Class	Geographical Location		Map Number	Major Admn. Div.	Remarks
		Latitude	Longitude			

Efforts, however, are in hand to improve the format on the pattern suggested by UNGEGN and then placing this gazetteer on a Website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) UNO may arrange training on Toponymy preferably in some South East Asian/South Asian Country.
- 2) Time frame for various activities may be fixed and Nations may be persuaded to adhere to fulfill their obligations.